

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 were pending in the application. Claim 3 has been amended. No claims have been added. Claim 4 has been canceled. Therefore, claims 1-3 and 5-8 are now pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application is requested for at least the reasons that follow.

Applicants appreciate the acceptance of the change in inventorship of the present application in light of the papers filed July 28, 2003.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of the allowable subject matter in claim 2.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1 and 3-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,899,399 (hereinafter "Brown") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,794,877 (hereinafter "Ono"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

The rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn because the references, either taken separately or together, fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention. For example, the references fails to disclose, teach or suggest, among other things, "wherein said spool is made of light alloy, and said bearing is made of steel," as recited by claim 1. The Office Action states that Brown teaches all the elements of the retractor except for the spool being made of a light allow and that Ono teaches a spool (3) made of a light alloy. (*See* Office Action at p. 2). Applicants disagree. Brown discloses a seat belt pretensioner with a spool (114), retractor shaft (108), bearing (104) and pretensioner (130). The bearing (104) supports the retractor shaft (108) and is disposed in the opening (94). Ono merely teaches a retractor with a bobbin (3) made by combining aluminum alloy or copper and resin. Brown and Ono fail to disclose a bearing that is made of steel. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

The rejection of claim 3 should be withdrawn because the references, either taken separately or together, fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention. For example, the references fails to disclose, teach or suggest, among other things, "the bearing comprises a material having a greater hardness than the spool," as recited by amended claim 3. As discussed above, neither Brown or Ono disclose, teach or suggest a bearing that is made of

steel or of any material harder than the spool. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 5-8 depend from claim 1 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations set forth in these dependent claims.

Conclusion

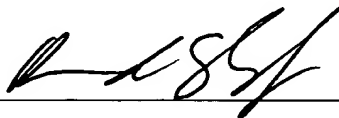
Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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